Regulatory Fit and Equal Opportunity/Diversity: Implications for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI)

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Abstract

DEOMI is the primary provider of human relations, equal opportunity (EO), and diversity training for the military. The primary mission of DEOMI is to foster acceptance of beliefs and proactive engagement in behaviors that foster non-discrimination, diversity, and social justice as legally/morally appropriate, and to achieve these goals without harm to the primary goal of mission readiness. However, creating permanent attitudinal and behavioral change is complex, especially in the controversial areas of equal opportunity and diversity. It is argued that the theory of regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997) and the associated principle of regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000) provide a conceptual framework of EO and diversity and that when regulatory fit is properly managed, it will create greater attitude change and willingness to positively engage EO/diversity. The purpose of the current paper is to explicate regulatory focus and regulatory fit in relation to EO/diversity and to discuss managing fit in terms of both day-to-day training operations and broader strategic issues for DEOMI.

The findings in this report are not to be construed as an official DEOMI, U.S. military services, or Department of Defense position, unless designated by other authorized documents

Regulatory Fit and Equal Opportunity/Diversity: Implications for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI)

The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), located at Patrick Air Force Base, FL, is the primary provider of human relations, equal opportunity, and diversity training for military. Established in 1971 by the Department of Defense, the primary mission of DEOMI (originally named the Defense Race Relations Institute) is to foster acceptance of beliefs and proactive engagement in behaviors that foster non-discrimination, diversity, and social justice as legally/morally appropriate, and to achieve these goals without harm to the primary goal of mission readiness. However, creating permanent attitudinal and behavioral change is complex, especially in the controversial areas of EO and diversity. It is argued that the theory of regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997) and the associated principle of regulatory fit (Higgins, 2000) provide a conceptual framework of EO and diversity and that when regulatory fit is properly managed, it will create greater attitude change and willingness to positively engage EO/diversity. The purpose of the current paper is to explicate regulatory focus and regulatory fit in relation to EO/diversity and to discuss managing fit in terms of both day-to-day training operations and broader strategic issues for DEOMI.

Regulatory Focus and Regulatory Fit

Motivational orientation refers to well-recognized preferences to either acquire gains or avoid losses (Elliot & Thrash, 2002). According to regulatory self-focus theory (Higgins, 1999), acquiring gains orients goal pursuits as hopes and aspirations (i.e., promotion regulatory focus), and avoiding losses orients goal pursuits as obligations and responsibilities (i.e., prevention regulatory focus). In a state of promotion-focus, regulatory fit is created by eager goal pursuits because eagerness reflects greater risks and willingness to incur losses in the quest to acquire desired outcomes; promotion focus generates fit by seeking to match the desired end state. In a state of prevention focus, regulatory fit is created by vigilant goal pursuits because vigilance reflects eschewing of risk and greater willingness to sacrifice gains in order to prevent the loss of desired outcomes; prevention focus generates fit by seeking to avoid mismatches with the desired end state.

Regulatory fit refers to the incremental value created by the pursuit of desired outcomes in a manner that sustains an individual’s current motivational orientation toward either increasing gains or avoiding losses. Regulatory fit creates incremental value because it makes people “feel right” about whatever they are doing (Avnet & Higgins, 2006; Higgins, 2000), which is associated with “perceptions of ease or fluency and feelings of confidence or correctness” (Koenig, Molden, & Higgins, 2009, p. 1343). Feeling right as a result of fit is a cognitive interpretation of goal pursuit independent of affective reactions to goal pursuit (Cesario & Higgins, 2008). Attitude change is stronger when arguments are framed in a manner that sustains regulatory fit (Lee & Aaker, 2004), and greater psychological value is ascribed to expected outcomes when outcomes are pursued in a manner that sustains regulatory fit (Higgins, 2005). Furthermore, when individuals engage in activities in a state of fit, they engage goals and decisions more strongly (Higgins, 2005) and have stronger, more positive evaluative reactions to activities used to pursue goals (Higgins, 2000).

Although regulatory fit is a psychological theory of behavioral self-regulation, organizations are a collection of individuals. As such, motivation theories developed to explain individual behavior have been generalized to macro levels of organizational functioning; for example, equity theory, expectancy theory, and goal setting theory are psychological theories of individual behavior that have been applied at the team and organization levels. The line between individuals' motivational orientation and a collective representation of an organization's risk orientation is blurred, and the implications of fit are the same regardless of the characterization as micro-level motivational orientation or as macro-level risk orientation. Therefore, just as regulatory fit creates incremental value for individuals, concordance between an organization's risk orientation and an ideal objective should also create incremental value, especially in the domains of EO and diversity.

There are numerous interventions and policies designed to meet EO requirements and/or facilitate diversity. The interventions typically involve recruitment, selection, training, and retention. The associated policies typically address discriminatory behaviors and complaint/grievance procedures related to minority groups and women. In the military, policy also delineates bona fide occupational qualifications (BFOQs) that specify the personal characteristics required for duty. Until recently, these military BFOQs prohibited admitted homosexuals from serving and prohibited women from serving in combat positions. An EO/diversity intervention or policy is designed to either acquire diversity gains (promotion motivational orientation) or avoid discrimination losses (prevention orientation). Furthermore, an EO/diversity intervention or policy can be characterized as oriented toward differences among people or not oriented toward differences among people. The phrase "oriented toward differences" is being used in the general sense of all the different ways that people can vary. Interventions and policies oriented toward differences range from increasing awareness of differences among people as a function of social identities to explicit consideration of demographic variables in employment decisions. In contrast, interventions and policies not oriented toward differences range from increasing awareness of prejudices to explicit banning of the use of demographic variables in employment decisions. Orienting toward differences is an eager pursuit of diversity, and not orienting toward differences is a vigilant goal pursuit of avoiding discrimination. For example, cultural competency training orients toward awareness of cultural differences and how to use this awareness of differences to better navigate interactions with individuals from other cultures, whereas training on prejudice orients toward awareness of erroneous perceptions of differences as a function of social identity and how not to use these prejudicial beliefs as rationalizations for discriminatory behaviors.

EO/Diversity and Fit

Hypothetically, any intervention or policy can be framed as promotion-oriented diversity gains or prevention-oriented avoidance of discrimination losses. In contrast, goal pursuits of EO/diversity are imbued with either eagerness of orienting toward differences or vigilance of not orienting toward differences. Even activities that appear neutral on the surface are implemented to facilitate acquiring diversity gains or avoiding discrimination losses. For example, administering a climate survey in itself is not an eager or vigilant goal pursuit; rather, the intended usage of the climate survey data conveys eager versus vigilant goal pursuits. Based on the principle of regulatory fit, incremental value from feeling right should be created when EO/diversity interventions and policies sustain a motivational orientation (i.e., interventions and policies oriented toward differences should be framed as acquiring diversity gains, and interventions and policies not oriented toward differences should be framed as avoiding discrimination losses).

Interventions and policies typically associated with EO naturally foster fit between vigilant goal pursuits with the motivational orientation to prevent discrimination losses. Policy statements that unambiguously communicate that discrimination and/or favoritism based on social identity is unacceptable, specified procedures regarding processing and resolution of discrimination complaints, training mandates to disseminate discrimination policies and grievance procedures, and formal training of employees regarding unacceptable discriminatory behaviors are all based on vigilance for not differentiating among people based on demographic variables. This is why discussions of EO are almost universally framed as compliance, complaint resolution, and lawsuits (Pyburn, Ployhart, & Kravitz, 2008), which is a prevention motivational orientation to avoid discrimination losses.

Many interventions and policies, especially those traditionally viewed as being associated with diversity efforts, are less definitive in terms of fostering fit with motivational orientation. For example, mentoring can be readily framed as an aspiration for diversity gains created by increasing the probability that women and minorities are promoted. Mentoring can also be framed as an obligation that decreases the likelihood of discrimination losses (e.g., lawsuits) based on the failure to promote women and minorities. From a regulatory fit perspective, mentoring should be framed as achieving diversity gains. The determinant of motivational orientation framing is that mentoring is oriented toward differences among employees. Test score banding is a psychometric technique designed to mitigate adverse impact against minorities when using aptitude test scores in the selection process. Similar to mentoring, test score banding can be framed as an aspiration to achieve diversity gains by increasing demographic diversity or as an obligation to prevent lawsuits due to the failure to hire minorities. For test score banding, regulatory fit is created by framing test score banding from a prevention orientation to avoid discrimination losses. Again, the determinant of the motivational orientation choice is the vigilant goal pursuit strategy that is not oriented toward differences.

Operational Recommendations for DEOMI

Regulatory focus/fit theory has been used to explain individual reactions to affirmative action programs (Ellemers, Scheepers, & Popa, 2010; Haley & Sianius, 2006). We argue that all efforts in the areas of EO and diversity can be more broadly envisioned in terms of regulatory focus/fit. The key is that ultimately every EO/diversity intervention and policy is either oriented toward differences among people (eager goal pursuit) or not oriented toward differences among people (vigilant goal pursuit). To create and sustain regulatory fit, a promotion focused on achieving equality should be used to frame interventions and policies that orient toward differences, and a prevention focus on preventing discrimination losses should be used to frame interventions and policies not oriented toward differences. In terms of day-to-day activities at DEOMI, recommendations based on regulatory fit focus on creating fit in the immediate training environment, specifically in terms of training content and training the instructors.

Curriculum audit. Military equal opportunity advisor (EOA) training involves the delivery of training content, experiential learning, and day-to-day interactions between instructors and EOA trainees. Regulatory fit in the immediate training context deals with managing concordance between motivational orientation and goal pursuit strategy during delivery of training content and trainer interactions with EOA trainees. In a specific context, such as presenting an EO/diversity lecture to EOAs, fit can be created and sustained by ensuring that the goal pursuit strategy reflected in the training content matches the motivational orientation used to frame training content. As a simple example of non-fit, the EOA curriculum includes arguments for improving diversity based on creating a discrimination-free environment. Such a message creates a state of non-fit because a discrimination-free environment is created by goal pursuits that are not oriented toward differences, whereas diversity gains are created by goal pursuits that are oriented toward group differences. Creating a discrimination-free environment fits with a message frame based on the motivational orientation to prevent discrimination losses. Although this issue of message framing mismatch may appear to be minor semantic details, researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that framing persuasive arguments to create regulatory fit causes greater attitude change than arguments framed in a manner that fails to create regulatory fit (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Cesario, Higgins, & Scholer, 2008; Lee & Aaker, 2004).

Training EOA instructors. The EOA instructors also have a critical role in creating and sustaining fit. Most EOA training content is based on vigilant goal pursuits (e.g., complaint processing) that fit the motivational orientation of preventing discrimination losses. However, trainers often frame vigilant goal pursuits using more pleasant, hopeful aspirations of achieving diversity gains than the less pleasant obligation frame of preventing discrimination. As such, training EOA instructors to consistently create and sustain fit through proper motivational orientation framing of EO/diversity goal pursuits would likely increase training effectiveness. The focus of regulatory fit training would be to train instructors to recognize components of the EOA training that orient toward differences versus components of the EOA training that do not orient toward differences. Once EOA instructors learn to differentiate eager goal pursuits from vigilant goal pursuits, instructors can be trained to frame eager goal pursuits by promoting the acquisition of diversity gains and to frame vigilant goal pursuits as the avoidance of discrimination losses.

Fit from a Strategic Perspective

Acquiring diversity gains and avoiding discrimination losses are complimentary opposites of an egalitarian value system. Achieving egalitarianism requires a balanced approach toward both seeking diversity gains and avoiding discrimination losses. The potential benefits of creating and sustaining regulatory fit will be mitigated if diversity gains are pursued with minimal concerns for potential discrimination losses and if avoiding discrimination losses are pursued with minimal concern for diversity gains.

Over Pursuit of Diversity Gains

Diversity is often framed in terms of the assumption that all individuals are of equal worth or status (Fassinger, 2008). Equality currently is viewed as more than demographic diversity (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000); the goal of equality is to create and manage a heterogeneous mix of abilities, skills, ideas, and value systems, and the inclusion of underrepresented groups fosters desired heterogeneity (Pittinsky, 2010; Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009; Seyman, 2006; Syed & Kramer, 2009). Although diversity based on equality is desirable, the over pursuit of diversity can lead to increased discrimination.

The historical approach to affirmative action (AA) is an example of the potential to over pursue equality. The social policy of affirmative action was implemented by President Lyndon Johnson (Executive Order 11246), and it primarily targeted organizations that contract with the federal government. The original intent of AA was to compensate for the history of workplace discrimination against minorities and females (Crosby, Iyer, & Sincharoen, 2006). An organization’s legal obligation to implement an AA plan is not as clear-cut as compliance with EO statutes, yet many organizations voluntarily engage in AA planning (Kravitz, 2008). The uniform guidelines (EEOC, 1978) state that when demographic workforce analyses indicate discrepancies with the relevant labor market, organizations are permitted to weight race or sex in personnel decisions to remedy the exclusionary mechanisms. In accordance with the uniform guideline’s position on AA action, in the landmark case of Johnson v. Santa Clara County (1987), the Supreme Court permitted the promotion of a less-qualified female based on the fact that no women were employed in the job title.

However, more recent court rulings (e.g., Ricci v. DeStefano, 2009) have severely restricted preferential treatment based on race and/or sex in employment decisions (Sackett, Schmitt, Ellingson, & Kabin, 2001; Pyburn, et al., 2008). The courts have decided that the use of preferential treatment to rectify past discrimination fails to properly balance the benefits of diversity gains with the risks of committing discrimination. The current reality is that pursuing diversity through preferential treatment is a practical impossibility in almost all organizational contexts.

The problematic nature of AA also is clearly seen in the literature on individual perceptions about AA (Haley & Sidanius, 2006; Unzueta, Lowery, & Knowles, 2008). In this research, negative attitudes about AA increase as the strength of the AA initiative increases (strong forms of AA include the use of quotas and giving preference based on race/sex, while weak forms of AA include targeted recruiting and training of protected groups). Although there are mean-level race differences in attitudes about AA initiatives, this relationship between AA attitudes and the strength of AA initiatives is not moderated by race (Haley & Sidanius, 2006). Individuals from all walks of life recognize that the inequities of strong forms of AA do not feel right.

Diversity Gains and Navigating Risk of Discrimination

The responses to the over pursuit of diversity gains have been threefold. First, organizations promote diversity without addressing how increased diversity will be achieved. Second, organizations promote diversity gains by using interventions where goal pursuits orienting toward differences are viewed as acceptable. Third, organizations promote diversity as a mechanism to improve organizational effectiveness.

Incorporating aspirations for diversity into a mission statement is a ubiquitous example of promoting diversity without specifying goal pursuits to achieve diversity. For example, Harold McGraw III (2013), the president and CEO of McGraw-Hill, states “I believe that we are at our best when the men and women of The McGraw-Hill Companies work and thrive in a dynamic environment where inclusion is encouraged, differences are respected, and diversity is of paramount importance.” Diversity symbolism is important in that it conveys aspirations of tolerance and inclusion, which are viewed by most as a positive aspect of organizational climate; for example, the inclusion of minority testimonials on corporate websites positively affects applicant attitudes about working for an organization (Walker, Field, Giles, Armenakis, &

Bernerth, 2009). However, at some point, the creation of a positive diversity climate depends on more than just symbolism. To achieve meaningful diversity gains, the organization must commit to eager goal pursuit strategies oriented toward differences.

The second strategy is to promote diversity in those domains where orienting toward differences is generally accepted. Recruiting of minorities and women are not seen as violations of EO laws (Kravitz, 2008; Newman & Lyon, 2009; Pyburn, et al., 2008). Similarly, mentoring programs that focus on promotion and retaining of minorities and women are generally accepted (Kavlev, Dobbing, & Kelly, 2006). Cultural competency training and diversity celebrations that increase awareness and understanding of group differences also promote diversity by focusing on group differences.

The third strategy for attempting to navigate the issue that promoting diversity gains may lead to unacceptable levels of discrimination is to claim that organizational/team heterogeneity improves organizational effectiveness. In organizational research, this argument is known as the business case for diversity (Syed & Kramar, 2009). For example, Kochan, et al. (2003) state that “a more diverse work force—relative to a homogenous one—produces better business results” (p.4). The main thrust of this research has been to isolate the effects of compositional diversity on valued organizational outcomes (Pitts, 2009). Results from this compositional diversity approach have been mixed, but they mostly find little or no positive effect of diversity. Recent research had greater success studying diversity climate as a moderator of race and organizational outcomes. Avery, McKay, Wilson, and Tonidandel (2007) found absenteeism rates among Black employees was greatest when employees perceived that the organization placed little value on diversity; McKay, Avery, and Morris (2008) found that minority salespeople outperformed White salespeople in stores with positive diversity climates.

The reality is that there is far more evidence not supporting the business case for diversity than evidence supporting the business case for diversity. Sacco and Schmitt (2005) note that many psychological theories (e.g., social identity theory, attraction-selection-attrition theory) predict increases in compositional diversity likely will have negative effects on business-level outcomes, and they found that fast-food restaurants with a larger/smaller percentage of Black employees were less/more profitable (controlling for alternative socio-economic variable explanations). Furthermore, the extensive literature on the diversity-validity dilemma—the challenge of hiring high-quality applicants while simultaneously creating a diverse workforce—is based on mitigating expected losses in utility as a function of hiring strategies designed to comply with equal opportunity statutes (Finch, Edwards, & Wallace, 2009; Ployhart & Holtz, 2008; Roth, Bobko, McFarland, & Buster, 2008; Roth, Buster, & Bobko, 2011).

Over Pursuit of Avoiding Discrimination Losses

An organization can also over pursue avoidance of discrimination through assimilation policies (Plaut, et al., 2009). Assimilation policies dictate that people are treated the same regardless of race, sex, age, disabilities, and other such factors, which maximizes the likelihood of avoiding discrimination losses, but minimizes the probability of acquiring diversity gains. Given that there are subgroup differences on psychological predictors commonly used in the selection process (Roth, et al., 2008; Ployhart & Holtz, 2008), especially predictors that measure cognitive aptitude (Roth, et al., 2010), an assimilation policy will prevent meaningful diversity gains (cf. Kravitz, 2008).

Furthermore, employees are less satisfied in organizations that embrace assimilation (Plaut et al., 2009), whereas employees in organizations with positive diversity climates are more satisfied (Avery & Morris, 2008; McKay, et al., 2007).

Strategic Recommendations for DEOMI

Risk aversive nature of the military. Much the same as individuals have a chronic preference toward a motivational orientation, an organization's culture typically embraces risk orientation toward gains over losses or vice versa. For example, companies that develop cutting-edge communication devices have promotion-oriented cultures because survival is dependent on embracing risks necessary to create and patent the next generation of hardware and software. In contrast, companies that provide auditing services have prevention-oriented cultures because survival is dependent on avoiding the risk of mistakes so as to protect the financial integrity of clients. Similarly, variations for risk orientation will exist at the division, department, or team level within the organizations; for example, different functional areas may reflect promotion orientation (e.g., sales department), while other function areas may reflect prevention orientation (e.g., legal department).

Military culture is inherently risk aversive; safety and security are hallmarks of motivational orientation of avoiding losses. The implication of this strong prevention focus of military culture is that the strategic orientation of DEOMI should be more oriented toward avoiding discrimination losses than acquiring diversity gains. Obviously, the orientation toward avoiding discrimination losses should not be pursued to the exclusion of diversity gains (i.e., exclusive pursuit of assimilation). As previously discussed, there are many examples of DEOMI training content (e.g., cultural competencies and experiential learning) that are oriented toward differences that should be framed from a promotional orientation of diversity gains. However, at the strategic level, those domains where eager goal pursuits oriented toward group differences and promotion motivational orientation are preferred should be well specified and communicated throughout DEOMI. Otherwise, vigilant goal pursuits not orienting toward differences paired with prevention motivational orientation should be the default. When dealing with external stakeholders, the primary strategic message should focus on DEOMI's role in preventing discrimination in the military.

Related to this strategic prevention focus is the issue of avoiding the overuse of promotion framing that is void of an eager goal-pursuit strategy that specifies how diversity gains will be achieved. In the short term, symbolic messages about hopes and aspirations of diversity gains generate more positive affect and enthusiasm than symbolic messages about obligations and responsibilities of avoiding discrimination. At some point, though, there must be a tactical plan to connect the symbolic messages to achieving tactical outcomes. Given that affirmative action-type policies are unacceptable in most personnel decisions, the available tactical options for achieving diversity are limited relative to the available tactical options for preventing discrimination. Over the long-term, repeated exposure to symbolic messages about hopes and aspirations of diversity without clear tactical plans for achieving diversity risk being perceived as empty promises.

Utility. DEOMI is under constant pressure from external stakeholders to present evidence that justifies resources allocated to EO/diversity training. A common external stakeholder request is for empirical evidence that improving military diversity increases mission readiness. The strategic response to this pressure from DEOMI has been analogous to adopting the business case for diversity in that diversity leads to improved mission readiness. However, DEOMI has been unable to provide empirical evidence that supports the connection between EOA training and mission readiness or positive diversity climate and mission readiness.

The lack of empirical evidence is in part due to the problem that DEOMI has not been afforded the access and resources to design and conduct research to establish a causal connection between investing in diversity and mission readiness. However, even if these resources were allocated to conduct such research, it is unlikely that a positive effect of diversity on mission readiness could be reliably demonstrated. As previously mentioned, there is little positive empirical support that diversity increases organizational effectiveness, and finding such an effect in the military context would be equally difficult.

From the egalitarian perspective, seeking diversity is the morally correct choice (Syed & Kramer, 2009); diversity is not a business strategy. When framed in terms of moral correctness, there is a fundamental change in the question about the effect of diversity on mission readiness. The proper question is not about gains in mission readiness as a function of investing in DEOMI; rather, the proper question is about losses in mission readiness avoided as a function of investing in DEOMI. The key to this reorientation of the question is the interpretation of a null finding. The null effect is interpreted as a reason not to invest in DEOMI when the question is framed as gains in mission readiness. In contrast, the null effect is interpreted as a reason to continue to invest in DEOMI when the question is framed as avoiding losses in mission readiness.

To summarize, it is natural to think of investments in terms of generated returns as opposed to losses avoided. To this end, the leadership at DEOMI has embraced the notion that investing in DEOMI should create detectable improvement in mission readiness. Embracing this return on investment argument puts a difficult burden of proof on DEOMI to produce evidence of mission readiness gains as a function of EOA training and survey feedback about diversity. The DEOMI leadership should reorient the utility argument to avoiding discrimination losses because this argument is consistent with strong prevention orientation of the military culture, and the empirical burden of proof placed on DEOMI is more reasonable.

Discussion

Military culture is complex and multifaceted (Seoters, Winslow, & Weibull, 2006); historically, the dominant aspect of military culture has been the “combat warrior” value system. According to Dunivan (1999), the combat warrior value system is conservative and moralistic and taps the aggressive aspects of the masculine stereotype. Following the combat warrior value system results in exclusionary practices, including hostility toward outside social groups, resulting in a homogeneous force (dominated by White males, especially in the command structure) that separates itself from society. However, for the past fifty years, the military has been under intense pressure to evolve. Dunivan (1994, 1999) describes the evolving military culture as maintaining the conservative, moralistic, and aggressive components that create mission readiness but also seeking greater tolerance and inclusion of underrepresented groups, resulting in a heterogeneous force that is more integrated with society. This evolution of military culture is demarcated across time by the removal of rules and regulations regarding the manner in which minorities—and more recently, homosexuals and women—are allowed to serve.

Ultimately, the issue for DEOMI is the ongoing task of persuading stakeholders to eschew a singular focus on mission readiness imbued by the traditional combat warrior culture in favor of dual foci on both mission readiness and egalitarianism that characterizes the contemporary military culture. DEOMI is on the frontlines of working to eliminate those aspects of the combat warrior value system that leads to exclusion of, and hostility toward, underrepresented groups, while not adversely affecting mission readiness. We argue that creating/sustaining regulatory fit is an important component for changing attitudes about EO/diversity and generating greater commitment to and valuation of EO/diversity interventions and polices.

Although there is limited research on regulatory fit in the EO/diversity domains, there is a large body of research across many different areas that support regulatory fit arguments. That is not to say that regulatory fit is the most important determinant of attitude change and behavioral commitment. The perceived desirability of expected outcomes is the primary determinant of attitude change/behavioral commitment and the extent to which goal pursuits are perceived as effective/efficient in producing desired outcomes. The manner in which goals are pursued creates incremental value beyond the hedonistic value of an outcome; for example, an employee with a strong work ethic will value a raise more if it is earned through hard work than if the same raise amount is attained through ingratiation tactics aimed at the boss. However, it is clear that regulatory fit creates increases in attitude change and behavioral commitment beyond that produced by the desirability of outcomes and the effectiveness/efficiency of goal pursuits to produce desired outcomes. Given the challenges of changing attitudes and generating behavioral commitment, it is important to leverage any factor that increases attitude change and behavioral commitment to EO/diversity interventions and polices.

To this end, it was recommended that DEOMI consider ways to create and sustain regulatory fit at both the operational and strategic levels. Examples of ways to increase regulatory fit at the operational level includes a curriculum audit of the EOA training program to ensure fit in training content and training instructors to understand how to create and sustain fit when delivering training content. Examples of ways to create and sustain fit at the strategic level included understanding the challenges of fit in the strong prevention-oriented military culture and the problem of arguing that diversity gains improve mission readiness. Concerning the former, the promotion of diversity gains by focusing on differences should be limited given that the weighting of demographic variables in personnel decisions has been consistently interpreted as violations of EO laws. Concerning the latter, DEOMI should avoid embracing the position that investing in diversity is only justified if such investments produce gains in mission readiness. Rather, DEOMI should actively seek to change this return on investment justification by arguing that investments in diversity are justified as long as such efforts do not decrease mission readiness.

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